

DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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ABC/AZUSA PD ARREST FOUR IN BAR DRUG BUST

Azusa – The California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control, with the assistance of the Azusa Police Department, raided the Semag & Strops bar at 621 E. Arrow Highway in Azusa, and arrested four people on drug charges, including a 72-year-old man for selling crack cocaine.

The drug bust came after a three-month investigation in which undercover ABC Special Operations Unit investigators purchased methamphetamine, marijuana, and crack cocaine on four different occasions.

Those arrested included the bartender, 47-year-old Michael Donald Lackey of Covina who sold methamphetamine to the investigators and assisted in the purchase of drugs from patrons. Also taken into custody was 72-year-old Cruz Padilla of Azusa for selling crack cocaine. A search warrant at Padilla's nearby house resulted in the finding of more drugs. Arrested for selling methamphetamine were 45-year-old Robert Gilbert Hernandez of Azusa, and 48-year-old Cruz Salcido Ortega, Jr., both of Azusa.

The Semag & Strops (Games and Sports spelled backwards) bar has long been a source of law enforcement problems for a number of years. The Azusa Police Department has had over 200 calls for service at the location in the last few years to deal with fights, assaults, drug dealing, and drunk patrons. The bar has become known as a hangout for a local gang.

The Friday night raid was conducted by ABC Special Operations Unit investigators, along with investigators from ABC's El Monte District Office, and members of the Azusa PD vice unit. During the bust, drug paraphernalia was found inside the bar.

Because of the blatant drug use and sales inside the bar, ABC will begin administrative action to suspend or revoke the liquor license.

ABC is a department of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, which is under the direction of Secretary Maria Contreras-Sweet, a member of the Governor's Cabinet.